

**Statement by Senator Jon S. Corzine**  
**Introduction of the Education for Retirement Security Act of 2005**  
**April 27, 2005**

M. President, I would like to speak today about an issue that I believe should be a lifelong goal for all Americans—financial literacy.

More specifically, I want to highlight the necessity of financial literacy for men and women who are close to retirement. Senior citizens are too often the victims of predatory mortgage and lending abuses and other financial scams. AARP surveys show that over half of telemarketing fraud victims are age 50 or older. In fact, financial exploitation is the largest single category of abuse against older persons. It is clear that the vulnerability of this population stems from a lack of financial knowledge, so it is more important than ever that this Congress take steps to increase the availability of financial education for midlife and senior citizens.

Not only does poor financial literacy leave older Americans vulnerable to financial fraud, but it also leads to poor retirement planning. In the next thirty years, the number of Americans over the age of 65 will double. For many of these Americans, Social Security alone will be insufficient to cover all their expenses, particularly as health care costs rise. Only about half of American workers are currently participating in any pension plan, leaving more than 75 million Americans without an employer-sponsored pension. Even worse is the fact that fifty million Americans have no retirement savings whatsoever. M. President, these statistics are frightening. As our population lives longer, we must focus on retirement education for mid-life and aging Americans as well as consumer education for seniors.

My legislation, the *Education for Retirement Security Act* will address the need for financial literacy among seniors by creating a \$100 million competitive grant program that would provide resources to State and area agencies on aging, and nonprofit community based organizations, to provide financial education to mid-life and older Americans. The goal of this education is to enhance these individuals' financial and retirement knowledge and reduce their vulnerability to financial abuse and fraud, including telemarketing, mortgage, and pension fraud. The bill also creates a national technical assistance program that will designate at least one national grantee to provide financial education materials and training to local grantees.

I am proud to be reintroducing this legislation during the month of April, which is Financial Literacy Month.

We must offer those individuals who are close to or in retirement the tools they will need to make sound financial decisions and prepare appropriately for their retirement. The *Education for Retirement Security Act* will help older Americans learn how to avoid scams and invest well. With savvy financial planning and smart consumer skills, senior citizens will be more empowered to protect themselves and ultimately be better able to enjoy a more secure retirement.

M. President, I ask unanimous consent that my statement and the bill be included in the Record.